

We shall be smoked to death, like rats in holes! I'll shut it, or suffocate trying," Waxey said, if I don't?"

The tall form of Podijah disappeared in the mass of smoke that rolled back above the thunderclouds. There was no sound of chase after him, yet the noise was heard to chase. Almost simultaneously Podijah tumbled down the stairs, covered with cinders, his face and hands blistered, and some of his white locks were reduced to ashes.

"Bravely done!" cried Jessie. "I have not saved us, you have at least given us a reprieve."

"Don't praise me!" returned Podijah. "The price of a gal intercesses like an idiot."

"One-eyed Saul looked wildly around and laughed mockingly, then running to Hutter and pointing bleeding compassion, and pointing in the direction the girls had fled, exclaimed:

"Why do you stand here? After them—after them, for they need you not, help."

"We might look about us," said Jessie. "I have work to do now, to do what go this way and that way, and there is no rest for me if there's anything de pe rre I can do."

"Desperately!" replied Podijah. "The price of a gal intercesses like an idiot."

"We might cut a way through and our safety gain, if there is any lack of a fence or post to look after, but these gals can't start musket balls, nor can they shoot fire."

"Heaven!" exclaimed Paul. "What shall we do?" not for ourselves, but for these poor girls.

"Escape as you can through the darkness and as far as you go, we will trust to the mercy of the gods." They were themselves prisoners, answered Jessie, eagerly.

"Yes, we will trust ourselves to the humanity of the Lorries," said Judith and Ruth, hurriedly.

"You will find it a poor trust," returned Hutter, looking compassionately at the two girls. "It will be impossible merely your going there, and we are weak indeed of that."

"God bless you, Tom Hutter, and we can't indeed think of that. We will die if Heaven's will for these dear and helpless ones; but take care them never."

A faint groan came from without. The Todes was exulting in their success.

"What must he do?" asked Paul, in a agony of anxiety.

"We can do nothing," replied Hutter. "Remain here and be burnt, or rush out and be shot."

"Well, neither be burnt or shot," retorted Podijah sternly. "I'll hold together as long as possible and under. I hold together, I am going to knock under in the morning, my days, by gosh! I know that all hellish grass, but I don't want my grass cut while it's green. I'll hold on to existence to the last, though I may not have a place to live in one of those galls through the world. Tom, let us leave quickier to have a load of hay when there's a thunder shower comin' up like a mace?"

Laured wood houses shook with violence at the towering flame, which had eaten through the roof and now enveloped tile and other.

The group looked up in alarm, a red cloud of fire was thrust down through the ceiling.

"It is the flaming hand! it wavess us from our Paradise!" cried Jessie.

"Nay," said Paul, impressively, "some of us are going to an eternal Paradise."

The fire now crowded angrily in answer, and black smoke poured into the room like the tank and destruction of a dragon.

"Let each man—oh that his weapon is loaded. Take care gold! Stand back as far as you can from the flame and smoke. There's a burning under your cross, Miss Ruth! it blazes!"

"It is out!" said Podijah, campily, smothering the incipient glow with his great hand.

"We must dash across ahead," said Hutter.

"Foothills and Blinckens near the ladies. Blinck, be brave, and use those large arms of yours to the blunderbuss in the face and eyes, and the chest and head."

"You must run. This chile know what he bout. Haldens first laid bangin' out. Thought I'dors for dat time. Oh, golly, didn't it hurt when dev run me up to de light?"

"Pared to stop my bed like. You stood by me, marr's Tom, and I'll stand by you. Lor, won't I make dis blunderbuss spoke? When there's a thunder shower comin' up like a mace?"

The parties were now driven to the remoter corner of the room by their now and irresistible enemy, which was gathering strength and ferociousness with frightful celerity. Hutter unfastened the door, and the fresh access of the air, and the lightning, fell to the configuration. He stood motionless alone in the surging smoke, but not a shot was fired from the concealed and watching fact."

"There is no help for it," added Tom. "We must try it or never, Podijah?"

"At your side?" responded the Yankee, who exposed himself to danger as if he had been born to it, his child."

The walls were in the vicinities of the gas, and this was a warning crack and groan among the crumpling joints and trembling rafters.

"The nef will fall in a moment!" cried Haldens. "We are ready. Quick, Hutter, quick!"

The heart of Tom Hutter swelled, with courage, as his friends did, his muscles high, commanding a wave of motion, and his veins quivered for the contest.

"For the right, friends—is to the right! Keep under the smoke as much as you can and sleep as you go."

They glided unnoticed to the end of the doorway.

"Run for the shelter in the direction of Land Swamp," whispered Hutter.

"A crisis approaches. Dear young ladies, beware!" admonished Paul, whose steady bearing and flashing eyes told that he was ready to do battle for the fair beings under his protection.

"Now for a dash—dash, faster—stronger, give us back to the house as quickly as possible."

"We have two or three rods from the burning building, the flames shot up with increased brilliancy, throwing a strong glare upon the fugitives. A dozen men sprang from the grass and foliage to dispute their progress.

"Stop! shouted a voice that was startlingly familiar.

"Down! thought Hutter, springing toward him with a fierce look, and giving a blow at his head with his rifle. Vantassel staggered and fell upon one knee. The tall Yankee pressed to the side of Hutter and the bullet fell crumpled at his feet.

"Lie at you, you 'tarred critters! Podijah, you're stuck to me out here for nothing!"

"Come on a dozen of you, you're stuck to me—some of you'll be shot up in my body—shoot down the rebels—hoof 'em down," cried Vantassel, over whose prostate form four stout fellows were contending.

Blinck discharged his blunderbuss, and the scattering storm of buckshot wounded several.

"Seize the gal! seize the gal!" shouted Langford.

"I'm with you!" exclaimed Nat Herrick, both back approaching terror stricken girls.

"Oh, Paul, save us from those wretched—shrieked Judith."

"Here's for you, Mister!" said Herrick, leveling his gun at the rebels, but his eye to the young man's face, who, putting him between the young ladies and the villains, held them at bay. His person was the target for a dozen furious blows, with surprising adroitness, he turned aside and baffled.

The four men were now engaged in an unequal struggle.

"Fly to the swamp girls, while we keep the miscreants in check," said Herring.

The maidens can like frightened deer, for their defenders had the mortification to see their Toadies in pursuit of them without being able to go to their assistance. Overpowered by numbers, they gave ground, but not by inch. They were bruised and bleeding, they began to despair.

"Take 'em alive, boys, take 'em alive, we may have the pleasure of houghing 'em about Vantassel."

A single rifle shot rang sharp and deadly through the air. A Toady, who was pressing hard upon Hutter, raised his pistol and fell dead at the feet of his comrade.

"ounds of hell!" cried a thunderous voice. "You live blood, and slay and carnage, you shall have it!"

"How far could they follow 'em through these infernal meshes of wood?"

"For God's sake, have them! Little bodies could go. If they had been little, they could fight their way through such difficulties as these. Why, they'd leave some of their clothes at every step, and wouldn't have a rag left on 'em by the time they'd gone a dozen rods. Think how the stiddy drays have put their soft flesh."

"Tremble, miscreants, for our eyes! Saul is among you!"

The sabres flashed like lightning around the stronger's head. The tones of his voice, the boldness of his countenance, and the fatality

of his looks struck terror and consternation to the hearts of the Toady renegades. The survivors turned and fled for life.

"Cowards! where come back, and I will kill you all!"

One-eyed Saul looked wildly around and laughed mockingly, then running to Hutter and pointing bleeding compassion, and pointing in the direction the girls had fled, exclaimed:

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